

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 MCT-01

HA-05 NEAE-00 /103 W

-----023546 281624Z /40

P 281557Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3565

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EG, IS, XF

SUBJ: SADAT, PRESS CONTINUE STRESS OPTIMISM AND FIRMNESS

REF: CAIRO 22917

SUMMARY: SADAT STATEMENTS THAT "PEACE CAN BE REACHED
WITHIN TWO-THREE MONTHS...AND WEST BANK PROBLEM SOLVED IN
SIX-EIGHT WEEKS" SET TONE FOR OPTIMISTIC PRESS TREATMENT
DECEMBER 28. SADAT SAID THERE NO DIFFICULTY ON SINAI AND
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ARGUED PROGRESS MADE ON PALESTINIAN QUESTION DESPITE DIFF-
ERENCES WITH ISRAEL. BLASTED CRITICS, SAID PLO HAS LOST
RECOGNITION AND EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF U. S. SUPPORT
FOR "PALESTINIAN RIGHTS." GOE PREPARING COUNTER-PROPOSALS
TO BEGIN PLAN ON PALESTINIANS, NATURE OF PEACE AND STATUS
OF JERUSALEM. ARTICLES REJECT BEGIN POSITION ON ACQUI-
SITION OF LAND IN DEFENSIVE OF WAR. PRESS AVOIDS ANY

HINT OF DISAPPOINTMENT WITH ISMAILIA, WHICH WIDESPREAD
IN CAIRO, BUT SADAT AND GOE CLEARLY TAKING IT INTO
ACCOUNT. END SUMMARY

1. SADAT'S OPTIMISM AND FIRMNESS TO BARBARA WALTERS,
EGYPTIAN TV, AND DINNER GUESTS WELCOMING FGG CHANCELLOR
SCHMIDT SET TONE FOR PUBLIC TREATMENT OF PEACE PROCESS
DECEMBER 28. BANNERS HERALDED "PEACE CAN BE REACHED
WITHIN TWO MONTHS..." "WEST BANK PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED
IN SIX-EIGHT WEEKS" AND "THIRTY HOURS CHANGED COURSE
OF THIRTY YEARS."

2. SINAI. SADAT SAID THERE NO DIFFICULTY AS FAR AS EGYPT'S
INTERNATIONAL BORDERS CONCERNED. PROGRESS MADE AND ONLY
HIS DESIRE GUARANTEE SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINIANS
HAD PROMPTED HIM TO STOP RELEASE OF JOINT "STATEMENT OF
PRINCIPLES."

3. PALESTINIANS. SADAT SAID HIS PEACE INITIATIVES CON-
TRIBUTED TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE. FACT THAT CONVERSATIONS
REACHED POINT OF EXAMINING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AUTONOMY
AND SELF-DETERMINATION PROVE "TREMENDOUS PROGRESS MADE."
PLO HAD LOST RECOGNITION BY REFUSING PARTICIPATION IN
CAIRO CONFERENCE. HE DESCRIBED ARAFAT AS "SUBDUED, WEAK
MAN" AND RECALLED ARAFAT HAD AGREED PALESTINIANS COULD
BE REPRESENTED IN PEACE PROCESS BY PROFESSOR OF PALESTINIAN
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ORIGIN. SADAT STRESSED EGYPT TAKEN "FULL PRECAUTIONS"
TO INSURE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAEL FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRI-
TORIES AS WELL AS REALIZATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO
RETURN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF OWN STATE. PRESS ANNOUNCED
THAT SADAT WILL SEND MESSAGES TO THIRTY-FIVE CHIEFS OF
STATE ASKING FOR SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO SELF-
DETERMINATION.

4. CRITICS BLASTED. SADAT SAID ASAD WANTED HIM TO ASK
PERMISSION BEFORE LAUNCHING INITIATIVE AND BATH BELIEVES
ARAB INTERESTS ARE SUBORDINATE TO ITS OWN. NINETY-EIGHT
PERCENT OF SYRIAN PEOPLE, ACCORDING SADAT, SUPPORT
HIS DRIVE FOR REACE. FOUND IT STRANGE THAT BATH, HANDS
BLOODIED AT TEL ZATAAR, NOW ATTEMPTING SPEAK FOR PALES-
TINIANS. BOUMEDIENE BEING "INCONSISTENT" SINCE HE
HAD ONCE ADVOCATED PRIVATELY DIRECT PLO ISRAELI NEGOTIA-
TIONS. BY ALLOWING "CHILD IDIOT" QADHAFI TO HOST
TRIPOLI CONFERENCE, BOUMEDIENE HAD SUNK EVEN LOWER THAN
LIBYAN. TRIPOLI PARTICIPANTS SAT WITH CRIMINALS WHO
HIRED "MURDERERS AND HIGHJACKERS" IN NAME OF PALESTINE.
SADAT WOULD NEVER CLASP THEIR HANDS.

5. ISRAELI VS. EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS. ASKED BY WALTERS IF HE DISAPPOINTED WITH BEGIN PROPOSALS, SADAT REPLIED BEGIN "IS A MAN WHO NEGOTIATES WITH ME CLEARLY AND FRANKLY." ACCORDING PROMINENT AHRAM REPORT, STUDY UNDERWAY OF COUNTERPROPOSALS TO BEGIN PLAN INCLUDES THREE MAIN POINTS: PALESTINIAN QUESTION, NATURE OF PEACE AND STATUS OF JERUSALEM. COUNTERPROPOSALS WOULD ADDRESS LEGAL PRINCIPLES REFUTING LEGALITY OF OCCUPATION OF LAND BY FORCE, WITHDRAWAL TO RECOGNIZED BORDERS, PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION AND STATE, AND ISRAELI MILITARY WITHDRAWAL. GUMHURIYYA LEARNED THAT EGYPTIAN RESPONSE WILL ALSO DEAL WITH QUESTIONS OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AND MILITARY BASES IN SINAI. "EGYPTIAN SOURCES" SAID RETENTION OF

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SETTLEMENTS UNACCEPTABLE.

6. U. S. PRESS REPORTS SADAT ASKED AMBASSADOR DEC. 27

TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT CARTER RESULTS OF ISMAILIA TALKS AND EMPHASIZED U. S. SUPPORT FOR RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS NECESSARY TO REACH JUST AND LASTING PEACE. ATHERTON QUOTED THAT "U. S. FULLY UNDERSTANDS" EGYPTIAN POSITION AND WILL EXERT ALL EFFORTS TO HELP BRING ABOUT JUST PEACE.

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7. TREATMENT. PRESS, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND RECEIVED SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FROM GOE IN GATHERING OF EDITORS DECEMBER 27, TOEING MUCH THE SAME DEFENSIVELY UP-BEAT LINE. IN ADDITION TO OPTIMISM PROCLAIMED IN BANNERS, EDITORIALS ARGUED THAT SADAT HAS PROVED EGYPT'S OBJECTIVE IS GLOBAL SETTLEMENT. IT NOW UP TO "PALESTINI AN LEADERSHIPS" TO TAKE CLEAR STAND TO SAVE THEIR CAUSE FROM "ABSURDITY." REJECTIONISTS SAW THEIR ARGUMENTS REFUTED AGAIN AND WERE ASKED WHETHER THEY WOULD NOW CHANGE THEIR POSITION, "WHICH SUBORDINATE TO MOSCOW."

8. DEFENSIVE WAR? GUMHURIYYA DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE SPACE TO RTICLES IN EFUTATION OF BEGIN CLAIM THAT INADMISSIBILITY OF OCCUPATION OF LAND BY FORCE DID NOT APPLY TO 1967 "DEFENSIVE WAR". ARGUMENTS DIVIDED INTO REBUTTAL OF LEGAL ASPECTS OF HIS STATEMENT AND HISTORICAL ARGUMENT STRESSING THAT ISRAEL WAS AGGRESSOR IN 1967. (WE UNDERSTAND SADAT WAS STUNG BY BEGIN'S ASSOCIATING HIM WITH ISRAELI CLAIM THAT 1967 WAS DEFENSIVE WAR AND CONSIDERS IT UNFAIR BEGIN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS PRIVATE REMARKS.)

9. COMMENT. SADAT'S CREDIBILITY HAS ALREADY SUFFERED FROM DISAPPOINTING RESULTS OF ISMAILIA AND FACT HE ALLOWED PRESS TO CREATE UNREALISTIC POPULAR EXPECTATIONS. HIS BRASH PREDICTIONS OF SOLUTION IN TWO-THREE MONTHS ARE REMINISCENT OF MANY OTHER GOVERNMENT PROMISES. AS WAS CASE YESTERDAY, PRESS DOES NOT REFLECT THE DISAPPOINTMENT WITH ISMAILIA WHICH IS PREVALENT THROUGHOUT CAIRO (SEPTELS) WHILE MUCH OF NEGATIVE REACTION WE HVE HEARD RESULTS FROM NATURAL DEFLATION OF PRE-ISMAILIA EUPHORIA, IT IS FACTOR SADAT AND GOE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT. ELEMENT OF APPARENT IRONY IS THAT REJECTIONIST'S SUSTAINED ATTACKS HAVE IN FACT HELPED CEMENT DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR

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SADAT. MEDIA TREATMENT DESIGNED MAINTAIN THAT SUPPORT AND SADAT'S EXCORIATION OF BOUMEDIENE, QADHAFI AND

SYRIANS, WHILE DEEPLY FELT, SHOULD BE SEEN IN THAT
LIGHT. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAIRO23112
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770483-0559
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From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771213/aaaaakkh.tel
Line Count: 226
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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Reference: 77 CAIRO 22917
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 123179
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SADAT, PRESS CONTINUE STRESS OPTIMISM AND FIRMNESS
TAGS: PGOV, EG, IS, XF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/98035efc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009